**Half Moon Bay’s 51st Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off**

**The Super Bowl of Weigh-Offs Monday, October 14**

***After the World Record was shattered at the 2023 Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off, all eyes are on for what is in store for this year’s*** ***51st Annual Pumpkin Weigh-off.***

When:  Oct. 14; 7 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Where:  IDES Grounds, 735 Main Street, Main St, Half Moon Bay CA

Bring it on burly, beefy, bodacious behemoths! The excitement is building in Pumpkintown as the World’s Greatest Gourd Growers and their Goliath, mind-bending, Rhinoceros-sized orange orbs hope to squash the world record on **Monday, October 14** at the **51st Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off** –– the “Super Bowl of Weigh-Offs” –– in the World Pumpkin Capital of Half Moon Bay, California. Using a pay-by-the-pound system, the world’s biggest top prize of $9/pound will be awarded to the 2024 weigh-off champion thanks to title sponsor, Safeway. Also at stake are thousands of dollars in super hefty prize money distributed to the top 20 plus the big carrot: a $30,000 total mega-prize for a new world record pumpkin entered at Half Moon Bay.

Travis Gienger's mind blowing 2,749-pound mega-gourd set a new World Record and handily won the 2023 Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off in Half Moon Bay. Ron Root and Nick Kennedy also achieved a remarkable feat, setting a new California State Record with their 2,497-pound pumpkin. Additionally, growers set another milestone by recording the highest combined weight among the top 10 contender pumpkins ever weighed at any pumpkin weigh-off. These extraordinary achievements highlight the dedication, passion, and ingenuity of the pumpkin-growing community, inspiring future growers to reach for new heights.

A host of accomplished veteran growers are expected to contend for the coveted title. The champion will be feted and play a starring role in the world-famous Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival, Oct. 19-20 (including a free weekend at the posh, pumpkin-centric Ritz-Carlton on the stunningly beautiful Half Moon Bay coast) and also receive Half Moon Bay’s one and only ***Grand Champion Ring*** that will be awarded to the winner along with the $9 per pound top prize and the coveted Mel Mello Sr. Grand Champion Growers Jacket.

The spectacular ring is designed and sponsored by Josh Warshauer, second generation owner of Goldworks on Main Street in Half Moon Bay. The ring is sterling silver with the 51st Annual Weigh-Off logo in a 14kt yellow gold top plate with the winner’s name and pumpkin weight engraved on the inside.

Beauty will also share center stage with beefy brawn with a $1000 prize awarded for the “Joe Cotchett Family Most Beautiful Pumpkin” as judged by the audience based on color, shape and size.

The grand champion gourd (along with the top four overall) will be on display plus there's a special weigh-off champion pumpkin photo booth at the Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival, October 19-20, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Main Street.

Admission is free. Open to the public.

**Slated for History, The Unveiling of the Weigh-Off ‘Wall of Fame’:**

Half Moon Bay’s Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off marked 50 years in 2023 and this year to celebrate its fascinating story and proud history, organizers will be unveiling a special Weigh-Off Wall of Fame that will be permanently displayed on the south wall of the Cunha Market on Kelly Avenue starting in October. Coastside artist Julie Engelmann, who created the remarkable landmark mural in 2022 to honor the 50th Pumpkin Festival, designed and painted a new adjacent mural to frame and surround the special bronze cast Weigh-Off Wall of Fame Champions Plaque and Honorary Inductees Plaque. Founding underwriters of the project include Joseph W. Cotchett, Half Moon Bay Winery, Half Moon Bay Brewing Company, Safeway, IDES Society of Half Moon Bay, the Half Moon Bay Beautification Committee and Miramar Events.

**How It All Started:**

Sometimes a little seed can go a long way. What started out in 1974 as a fun, light-hearted contest between Circleville, Ohio and Half Moon Bay, California, two cities proclaiming to be the Pumpkin Capital of the World, has grown into Half Moon Bay’s Safeway World Championship Pumpkin Weigh-Off, the Super Bowl of pumpkin weigh-off competitions worldwide.

Lore has it that while visiting Half Moon Bay in 1974, Frank Barnhill, then mayor of Circleville, Ohio, was deeply impressed with the prolific and passionate local pumpkin-growing culture. He met with then Half Moon Bay mayor, Al Adreveno, and they agreed to have their two proud pumpkin-loving cities square off in the first head to head pumpkin weigh-off, hauling the largest local gourds to their historic city halls for the official weighing competition. Once concluded, the two mayors got on a phone call to announce their respective winning weight and grower. To formalize the proceedings, county ag representatives officiated both weigh-offs to make things official. That first year, Half Moon Bay’s biggest pumpkin, 132-pounds, grown by John Minaidis, won by one pound. Half Moon Bay brought home the coveted title of Pumpkin Capital of the World that very first year and a legend was born.